

REHS PROGRAM UPDATE

OCTOBER 2004

RENEWAL NOTICES

Renewal notices were sent out the last week of September 2004. If your registration card expires December 31, 2004 and you do not receive your invoice notify this office. If you have changed your address since your last renewal and may not have notified us of your new address please SIGN and FAX your new address to (916) 449-5665. Be sure to provide your name and registration number for verification purposes. If you have other questions you can call me at (916) 552-9991 or email:

mblood@dhs.ca.gov or Deann Kanenaga at (916) 449-5662 or email: dkanenag@dhs.ca.gov.

We will be posting to our web site the names of all REHSs that do not have a current registration starting April of 2005. If you don't have a current registration card you can call with your name and number and we will confirm your status. **Your registration is suspended and invalid if you fail to pay your fees by January 1, every other year.**

Starting this year we will be sending out new registration cards that are water resistant and laminated providing a professional look and feel.

LISTSERV

The effectiveness of the LISTSERV increases as more people subscribe. We have used the LISTSERV to announce training events and general program information. I would like to answer the program questions most important to REHSs through this venue. Please address questions and comments to REHSprog@dhs.ca.gov.

To join the LISTSERV log on to www.topica.com/lists/REHS .

EXAM REVALIDATION

A new Job Analysis for Registered Environmental Health Specialists in California has been completed. It is based on the results from the Job Analysis Questionnaire that was distributed in January 2004. *Standards*

for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999) stipulate the following recommendation about a job analysis for licensure and certification testing:

Practice in professions and occupations often change over time. Evolving legal restrictions, progress in scientific fields, and refinements in techniques can result in a need for changes in test content. When change is substantial, it becomes necessary to revise the definition of the job, and the test content, to reflect changing circumstance. (p. 157)

In our profession these changes are of two types: (1) newly formulated regulations, codes, and statutes; and (2) changes in the knowledge base needed by the Registered Environmental Health Specialists. Job analysis updates are critical to the integrity of the REHS examination because test items are developed from the existing knowledge base as identified by the job analysis. In fact, both professional and legal considerations require that each test item be linked to the required knowledge base.

The REHS Job Analysis provides a legally based definition of the scope of work for the REHS in California. It defines what we do currently by including a list of the important knowledge and skills needed for a competent job performance as well as the important routine and specialized tasks performed by Registered Environmental Health Specialists. All program areas and a general environmental health category are defined in terms of knowledge and skills required for minimal competence.

In September we brought together REHSs from throughout California to write new exam questions. We will be reconvening to review these new items and update existing questions in the item bank in order to fulfill the test plan requirements identified by the REHS Job Analysis.

From the REHS Job Analysis we compared existing and newly developed test questions (or items) to the important knowledge and skill statements to be sure that we are adequately testing the most relevant aspects of the practice. The Job Analysis also lists the significant tasks that an environmental health specialist is required to perform. This can provide a means to measure job performance and identify areas for further training as well as superior achievement.

Combined the knowledge, skills and task statements define a scope of practice that could be used to develop language for a Profession's Act that can eventually replace the Title's Act under which we are currently governed.

TRAINING COORDINATOR'S NETWORK

Statewide meetings of training coordinators occurred in March in Pasadena and in September in Alameda of this year. These meetings are designed to share ideas and training tools for use throughout the state. We now have 17 downloadable PowerPoint presentations on **FOOD & CONSUMER PROTECTION; PUBLIC POOLS; LEGAL AUTHORITY; ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL; HAZMAT; and RECRUITMENT**. You are welcome to copy and modify these presentations for your needs. The donating counties only ask for recognition of the work and time they have already invested. Anyone who would like to add to the list of presentations is encouraged to email me a copy of their presentation.

UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEWS

Currently there are five universities with approved environmental health programs: California State University, Northridge; California State University, San Bernardino; Loma Linda University; University of California, Los Angeles; and California State University, Fresno. Recently, we heard from California State University, San Jose (SJSU); they are working on a developing a curriculum that will meet the statutory requirements. It is an exciting time since SJSU was once a premier environmental health program.

We have visited and reviewed the environmental health programs at California State University, Northridge; California State University, San Bernardino; and Loma Linda University. The pre-survey form was sent to California State University, Fresno in July 2004 and we are waiting for their response so we can schedule a site visit. We plan to start the review of the University of California, Los Angeles in the spring of 2005.

GOVERNOR'S CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Governor's Performance Review Board has released their report and is calling for sweeping changes in the structure of state government. What it means for the REHS program is unclear. We were not specifically mentioned in the report but presumably we would move along with the Environmental Management Branch (EMB) to the Department of Environmental Protection – Division of Pollution Prevention, Recycling and Waste Management. EMB includes the following programs: Beaches; Building Codes; Institutions; Medical Waste; Department of Defense (DOD); Radiation Cleanup; Recreational Health; Shellfish; Nuclear Emergency Response; Radon and EHS Registration.

The Report recommended that the Registered Environmental Assessor (REA) Program should be abolished. They cite as their reason a lack of enforcement and oversight that has not led to "measurable enhancements in environmental protection". The new structure will not completely consolidate environmental health practice into one department.

An Environmental Health section, within the Center for Public Health, would be located under the Department of Health & Human Services in the proposed changes.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Committee met on October 7, 2004 at the environmental health offices in Orange County. The Committee's prime interests are:

continuing education; effective assessment and training tools; and recruitment of new environmental health specialists.

Curriculum Review Report

On May 24, 2004 the Committee met to review the current curriculum requirements found in California Health and Safety Code section 106635 and compare them to the current job analysis. The conclusion of the Curriculum Review report supports a review of the internal guidelines adopted by the Committee in 1989 Criteria for Undergraduate and Graduate Approved Environmental Health Curriculums. This document interprets the educational requirements set forth in statute. The Committee did not find it necessary or prudent at this time to seek a legislative change.

The Committee formed an Ad Hoc subcommittee to review the existing criteria document used to evaluate university degree programs. This subcommittee will hold its first meeting via conference call December 15, 2004. The purpose of the subcommittee will be to review the evaluation process for university programs and the interpretation of the educational requirements generally. Representatives from ten California Universities including those with “approved” programs will join Committee members to interpret vague language in the statutory educational requirements such as “basic science” and “general biology”.

The Committee will meet in open session April 25, 2005, 9AM–12PM, Monday at the next Annual Educational Symposium in Monterey, California.

On January 1, 2005 there will be a vacancy on the Committee for a privately employed REHS. Interested persons should submit their resume to:

Margaret Blood, REHS
California Department of Health Services
REHS Program
MS 7404
PO Box 997413
Sacramento, CA 95899-7413

RECRUITMENT

Thanks to the considerable contributions from many county environmental health departments, we have developed a statewide PowerPoint presentation aimed at encouraging persons to join the environmental health field and specifically to become registered in California. This presentation is designed to be modified as appropriate by any REHS who would like to make a local recruitment presentation.

Recently we wrote an article describing the registration program in California for the National Environmental Employment Report, a publication that advertises to students and other job seekers across the country on environmental job openings. They also sponsor national satellite video conferences at university sites providing a forum for employers and interested students to connect.

*Margaret Blood, REHS
Program Administrator
REHS Program
California Department of Health Services*